

No. 1259/67

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
1 August 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Communist Attitudes in South Vietnam
Toward Peace Negotiations

Summary

There is considerable evidence that the desire for peace is widespread among rank-and-file Communist troops and cadres in South Vietnam and some evidence, in the comments of prisoners and defectors, and in the nearly doubled rate of Chieu Hoi ralliers that defeatism is growing. Captured documents [REDACTED] moreover, frequently refer to the need to counter the problem of "pacifist attitudes" among the Viet Cong and the populace. There is, nevertheless, very little to suggest that there has been, in the past few months, either an increased anticipation of, or desire for, early peace talks among the Communists in the South.

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It was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence.

1. The majority of cadres appear still to envision a termination of the war simply in terms of winning or losing it. The idea of a negotiated settlement is apparently not given very extensive consideration among the rank-and-file. Southern Communist leaders, for the most part, appear still to be thinking in terms of protracted military conflict, rather than a purely political struggle, to achieve their objectives. Prisoners and defectors who do believe early negotiations to be the best solution to the present conflict generally still envision that talks will lead to US withdrawal, a return to the provisions of the Geneva accords, and eventual reunification under Hanoi. Documents which refer to the problems of "pacifism" in the Communist movement generally do so in the context of how to increase the war effort rather than in terms of how to handle talk about negotiations.

25X1C 2. There have been [REDACTED] discussions during the past year among party cadres at district level over the question and advisability of negotiations. [REDACTED]

25X1C [REDACTED] the subject is presently viewed with mixed feelings and uncertainty among some of the Viet Cong cadre, but that party leaders continue to stress the need to carry on the war and are telling cadres "not to believe that diplomatic efforts will bring any solution."

3. Some insight into the attitude of higher-level cadres concerning the question of negotiations appears to have been obtained [REDACTED]

25X1X [REDACTED] no southern leaders who were currently thinking in terms of abandoning "military struggle" and concentrating on pursuing Communist goals through strictly political means. [REDACTED]

25X1X [REDACTED] might favor negotiations if there were clear evidence that the allies would cease military activity

and if there were some advantage to be gained. [REDACTED] reiterated, however, the Communists' belief that they stand to gain not just in a military sense but in terms of their over-all goal by prolonging the war.

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4. [REDACTED] there had been some concern among [REDACTED] over the published interview in January 1967 of North Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh with newsman Wilfred Burchett in which Trinh indicated Hanoi's possible willingness to negotiate with the US if bombing of North Vietnam were stopped. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] southern cadres were taken by surprise and initially feared that their interests might be abandoned at such negotiations. Although the [REDACTED] apparently never received any guidance on the matter from higher authorities in the South, such fears eventually subsided.

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5. The most authoritative indication of the party's attitude to date remains the captured tapes of a political lecture given in August 1966 to forces of North Vietnam's 7th Division operating in the South near Saigon. The lecture was believed to have been given by North Vietnamese Major General Tran Do, reportedly serving as deputy political officer for the Viet Cong forces in the South. Do stated that "we want to end the war through military victories and not peace negotiations," and that "even when we are fighting diplomatically, we must multiply our military victories if we want to succeed diplomatically." Do also indicated, as have other high party figures, that the issue of negotiations and a peace settlement was the responsibility of the politburo in Hanoi.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

STATINTL

Attached is memo Drex requested on VC attitudes toward peace negotiations.

As can be seen by draft, we really have very little hard info from which to form definitive view of this subject.

Memo has been reviewed by C/FEA

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STATINTL

31 Jul 67

(DATE)

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D/OCI Review 31 Jul 67

Dates:

Dissem 1 Aug 67

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REQUESTED OR ORIGINATED BY: D/OCI for Dept. of State Habib Committee

PURPOSE:

STATINTL

ASSIGNED TO:

FEA

GRAPHICS

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☐ Specified Other _____

Cat. E (Routine internal and external)

STATINTL

Cat. D (Routine internal CIA only)

Cat. B (Subcabinet and internal CIA)

Cat. A (Elite--External top officials only and internal CIA)

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